

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the outstanding Office Action, claim 6 was rejected for lacking clear antecedent basis. Claims 1-3, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Wahl (U.S. Patent No. 2,303,870). Claims 1, 2, and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Alberts (U.S. Patent No. 3,600,766). In addition, claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Wahl in view of Hanson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,730,498). The above rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim Objections

Claim 6 was objected to for lacking clear antecedent basis. In response, claim 6 was amended to remedy this issue.

§102 Claim Rejections

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of original claim 5. In addition, claim 1 requires the guide column being provided generally perpendicular to the fastener tapes. This amendment is supported throughout the Figures. In particular, the amendment is supported in Figures 4a-5b. Claim 1 is not anticipated since none of the cited references discloses the guide column as recited.

Wahl fails to disclose a guide column arranged perpendicular to fastener tapes. Instead, Wahl discloses a guide column 69 shown in Figure 11 provided parallel to the overlaying materials 56 and 60. See Wahl Figures 9-13 and column 3, line 67 through column 4, line 13. Accordingly, Wahl fails to anticipate claim 1. Claims 2-4 and 6 depend on and further limit claim 1, therefore, for at least the same reasons, they are also not anticipated by Wahl. In addition, since independent claim 5 also recites a guide column that is constructed to perpendicularly engage fastener tapes, Wahl also fails to anticipate claim 5.

Alberts also fails to disclose a guide column arranged perpendicular to fastener tapes. Rather, Alberts discloses a slider 32 having a wedge-shaped center post 70 orientated parallel to

a first piece of material 24 and a second piece of material 30. See Figures 1, 4-6, and column 1, line 64 through column 2, line 39. Accordingly, Alberts does not anticipate claim 1. As discussed above, claims 2-4 depend from and further limit claim 1, therefore, for at least the same reasons, they are also not anticipated by Alberts.

§103 Claim Rejections

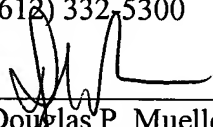
Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Wahl in view of Hanson et al. Hanson et al. do not remedy the deficiencies of Wahl discussed above. Applicants are not conceding the relevancy of Hanson et al. to the feature of claim 7, nor the suitability of Wahl and Hanson et al. for combination.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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